

REMARKS

The Applicants appreciate the opportunity for their counsel to discuss the Examiner's rejection with the Examiner via telephone on October 1, 2002. During the interview, the applicant's counsel and the Examiner discussed claims 1 and 10 as amended herein. The examiner generally agreed that the amended Claim 10 appeared to be allowable over the cited references, subject to a possible follow-up search. The Examiner also suggested that the Applicants' counsel review the DURAFLEX® reference in detail, which the Applicants' counsel has done.

The Examiner rejected the claims based on 35 USC § 102 and 35 USC § 103, citing the DURAFLEX® and Huckenbeck references. The Examiner's rejection to claim 15 has been resolved by the foregoing amendment.

With regard to claim 1, the use of a lanyard connector having a coupling portion that is capable of selective decoupling from an attachment is highly advantageous in the art. As a result of the selectively coupleable first and second portions and the selective coupling and decoupling of the attachment, a user can couple and decouple at two locations (and possibly in two different manners) on the lanyard connector, rather than just one. This makes the system significantly more adaptable and modular for the specific needs and interests of a user. For some users, it is more convenient to couple or decouple one portion of the body of the lanyard from another portion of the body (e.g., by unbuckling a buckle), while for others, it is more convenient to couple or decouple the attachment from a neck.

As mentioned in the specification, in the present invention, "the user can selectively decouple the attachment from the lanyard substrate (e.g., a strap) by selectively decoupling an attachment directly from the lanyard connector or by selectively decoupling a first portion of the

connector from a second portion of the connector." Page 7, paragraph 34. "[P]roviding these different options provides a user diversity and choice in connecting to a particular attachment." Page 8, paragraph 36.

The Applicant's examination of the DURAFLEX® reference has revealed that the reference does not teach the applicant's claimed invention. Specifically, the DURAFLEX® reference does not teach selective decoupling of an attachment. Instead, the reference on Page 32 states that "we offer a fixed unit and a quick disconnect system based on our side squeeze buckles." (emphasis added). The disconnect system does not mention or highlight any type of quick disconnect of the key ring holder, bulldog clip, swivel snap hook or other attachment piece.

With respect to Claim 10, a neck that is coupled within a portion of the attachment is very advantageous. By mounting an attachment onto the neck, it is very convenient to decouple the attachment from the neck and readily replace it with another attachment. This convenience and modularity is not obviated by the cited references. Claim 18 has been amended to further distinguish the claim from the cited references.

Wherefore, the present application is subject to allowance and immediate allowance is respectfully requested. Should the examiner have any questions or concerns, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned directly at (801) 321-8826.

Dated this 9th day of October, 2002.

Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. A lanyard connector, comprising:

a lanyard connector body that is configured to be coupled to the ends of a lanyard substrate, and

a coupling portion extending from the lanyard connector body to thereby allow selective coupling [attachment] of an attachment to the lanyard connector and selective decoupling of the attachment from the connector, wherein the lanyard connector body comprises:

(i) a first portion that is configured to be coupled to the ends of the lanyard substrate; and

(ii) a second portion that is selectively coupled to the first portion, such that a user can: (A) selectively attach an attachment to the coupling portion; and (B) selectively attach the first portion of the connector body to the second portion of the connector body.

2. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 1, wherein the first and second portions of the lanyard connector body are each plastic members.

3. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 1, wherein the first portion of the lanyard connector body comprises a female portion and the second portion comprises a male portion that is selectively mounted within the female portion.

4. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 3, wherein the coupling portion of the lanyard connector is coupled to the male portion of the lanyard connector body.

5. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 1, wherein the first portion of the lanyard connector body comprises a female buckle portion and the second portion comprises a male buckle portion that is selectively mounted within the female portion.

6. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 1, wherein the coupling portion is configured to receive an attachment rotatably coupled to the coupling portion.

7. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 6, wherein the first and second portions are configured to be nonrotatably coupled to each other, such that the attachment rotates about the coupling portion while the connector body is firmly, nonrotatably secured to the lanyard substrate.

8. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 1, wherein the lanyard connector body receives the ends of the lanyard substrate therein.

9. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 1, wherein the [coupling] second portion of the lanyard connector body comprises a neck upon which an attachment is selectively mounted.

10. A lanyard connector, comprising:

a lanyard connector body that is configured to receive the ends of a lanyard substrate therein, and

a neck extending from the lanyard connector body to thereby allow selective, rotatable attachment of an attachment to the lanyard connector, wherein an attachment is selectively, rotatably mounted onto the neck such that the neck is coupled within a portion of the attachment, and wherein the lanyard connector body comprises:

(i) a first portion that is configured to receive the ends of the lanyard substrate therein; and

(ii) a second portion that is selectively coupled to the first portion, such that a user can: (A) selectively, rotatably mount an attachment onto the neck; and (B) selectively attach the second portion to the first portion.

11. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 10, wherein the first portion of the lanyard connector body comprises a female portion and the second portion comprises a male portion that is selectively mounted within the female portion.

12. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 11, wherein the male portion includes the neck thereon.

13. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 10, wherein the male portion comprises first and second prongs that selectively mount within the female portion.

14. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 10, wherein the lanyard connector body comprises: (i) a male clamping portion; and (ii) a female clamping portion, the male clamping portion selectively mounting within the female clamping portion to clamp the first and second ends of the lanyard substrate therebetween.

15. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 10, wherein [wherein] the lanyard connector body comprises

a female buckle portion; and

a male buckle portion, the male buckle portion including the neck thereon, the male buckle portion being selectively mounted within the female buckle portion, such that a user can: (A) selectively, rotatably attach an attachment to the neck; and (B) selectively attach the male buckle portion to the female buckle portion

16. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 15, wherein the female buckle portion has (i) a male clamping portion; and (ii) a female clamping portion.

17. A lanyard connector as recited in claim 15, wherein the female buckle portion has (i) a male clamping portion; and (ii) a female clamping portion, the male clamping portion selectively mounting within the female clamping portion to clamp the first and second ends of the lanyard substrate therebetween.

20. A lanyard, comprising:

a lanyard substrate having first and second ends;

a lanyard connector body, comprising:

a female buckle portion; and

a male buckle portion, and

a neck extending from the male buckle portion of the lanyard connector body to thereby allow selective, rotatable attachment of a variety of different attachments to the lanyard connector, wherein the male buckle portion is selectively mounted within the female buckle portion, such that a user can: (A) selectively, rotatably attach an attachment onto [to] the neck such that the neck is coupled within a portion of the attachment; and (B) selectively attach the male buckle portion to the female buckle portion, and wherein the female buckle portion comprises:

a male clamping portion; and

a female clamping portion, the male clamping portion [selectively] mounting within the female clamping portion with the first and second ends of the lanyard substrate therebetween.

21. A lanyard as recited in claim 18, wherein the male and female body portion of the lanyard connector are each made from a plastic material.

22. A lanyard as recited in claim 18, wherein the male portion comprises first and second prongs that selectively mount within the female portion.